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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

SEPTEMBER 1st, 1861.

VINCENT NOVELLO.

"A loss of an honorable and honored musician is announced in the obituary of the month,—the departure of the patriarch VINCENT NOVELLO, which took place at Nice on the 9th August. He was aged eighty. By descent an Italian, the larger part of his life and his professional career were passed in London, where his sound musical knowledge, and his command over the organ (then not common in England), enabled him to do valuable service to his art. Especially was this rendered in the naturalization of sacred music of the great Italian and German writers belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. The Masses of Mozart, Haydn, Hummel, and many writers less known,—still meriting to be known,—owe the largest share of their introduction in a complete form to Mr. Novello's editorship, and to their performance in the Portuguese Chapel, to which he was during many years attached. He was also an influential member of the Council of the Philharmonic Society, in the days when to belong to the same was an European distinction. He composed much; but what he produced was rather the work of an honest and temperate musician, perfectly trained, than the product of genius. That he was esteemed as a man,—that his society was cultivated beyond the verge of his own profession,—will be seen (to name but one instance) in the letters of Elia. He had a numerous family; and to their distinction in his own art, and in the world of letters, it would be superfluous to advert. No common respect is implied in our farewell to one of the most sterling musicians of the old school whom this country has possessed as a resident."—*Athenæum*.

In the *Musical Times* for October we propose to give a notice of the life and labors of the late VINCENT NOVELLO, who has done more than any musician to diffuse a taste for the best music amongst the least wealthy of musical amateurs.

TRUTH ABOUT MUSIC & MUSICIANS.

No. 8.*—POLITICAL MUSIC.

*Translated from the German by SABILLA NOVELLO.**"Fie! a politic song,—a scurvy song."—Göethe.*

WE live in an age of political excitement, and it is no wonder that the stormily-upheaving billows of statistic interest should overflow into other and foreign regions, and surge upon even the sacred shores of art itself. We all, as burghers of the state, feel the pressure of these ever-tossing floods; and, the more violent they are, the more they occupy our attention. Artistes are also citizens, and their political opinions, inclinations, and partizanships, involuntarily influence their views of Art, because in it they fancy they discern a possible handmaiden to Polity. This fancy leads them into sin and error: into sin, because they misuse art as a slave—into error, because they entirely misunderstand what art in general, and musical art in particular, *can and ought* to effect, which I have demonstrated to you in my letter on the "Aim of musical art." When their pretensions soar greatly, they transform the Goddess of Art into the Goddess of Liberty, clap a Phrygian cap on her head, and thrust a party-flag into her hand,—sometimes into the other a sword or incendiary torch,—and bid her, like a second Rachel, declaiming the "Marseillaise" with heart-stirring emphasis, take the field and lead on to victory.

I am willing to suppose that those who act thus, err honestly; and do not misapply art, because their music, when composed for a proper purpose, does not meet with the approval they hope to obtain. That they do err is evident from the fact that they exact from art two opposing results:—some demand that it should be ancillary to the Present, *i.e.*, the *political* Present; while others demand that it should act prophetically, and influence the Future. These errors originate in a misconception of music. *Music is the language of humanity*, and consequently neither a national dialect nor an interpretation to be monopolized by burgher, freeman, slave, noble, plebian, rich, or poor: *Music is one and the same for all mortals*; and all mortals are in heart alike, throughout different ages and different countries. Love, joy, sorrow, holy emotion, and high aspiration, have been felt by every human soul since the time of Adam, and will continue to be felt as long as human beings exist. In however many *hundred languages* man may express his sentiments by *words*, these sentiments have and will always be expressed by *one language of tones*—that of music. In the same manner, however, that the language of every nation develops from rough-hewn beginnings, and perfects itself in order to utter thought in more defined, minute, and elegant terms, so also has the universal human language, Music, developed and perfected itself,

* No. 7 appeared at page 349, No. 190.